**PENNEY’S WOOD COMMUNITY WOODLAND GENERAL MEETING**

**HELD IN PENNEY’S WOOD ON WEDNESDAY 4 AUGUST 2021**

**Present:**

Janine Brodie; Judy Dobson; Hazel Cameron; Julie King; Alan Cassidy; Phil Brewster; Alastair Kerr; Gill Kerr;

**Apologies:**

Helen Cassidy; Willie & Helena Thomson; Iain Campbell;

Janine welcomed all to the meeting.

**Fossoway Gathering**

It was agreed that we would have representation at the Fossoway Gathering as we are a local organisation despite many committee members being away on holiday. A rota of available volunteers would be drawn up nearer the time – at present Judith, Alan & Helen (def maybe); Janine and Gill had volunteered but all are welcome!

Julie had been busy making bunting, scrunchies, pouches and lavender bags for sale and these would be displayed on a branch stand

Helen was organising photo-board posters/photos

Gill would make cakes or chocolate spoons

Janine would make a traybake/small cakes

Judy would bring some oak tree plants

Iain to make tablet if possible

If anybody has anything else they would like to add to the stand – all gratefully accepted. Gathering is 12-5pm

**Action: All available**

**Paths**

We discussed Alastair’s recent detailed email outlining issues with the grass cutting. It was thought that cutting the grass every two weeks was too long an interval as the grass became badly overgrown and encroached on the paths. He outlined that our aim is to keep the woodland as attractive and welcoming as possible for visitors and the long, wet grass overhanging the paths made it difficult to walk without becoming wet. Sometimes, because of the weather, it could be 3-4 weeks between mowing. It was agreed that the paths need to be widened. Judith & Stuart had used a scythe to take the grass down at the sides which was thought to be too labour intensive throughout the wood. Alastair thought we should take the mulcher off and Alan suggested mowing twice may be better than strimming.

It was agreed that short term we should mow weekly, take the mulching funnel off the mower and keep the main paths as wide as possible. Willie would be asked if he could change the rota and there would be a small plaque on our stall at the Fossoway Gathering asking for more mower volunteers. The West Gate path and Eastern loop would be widened next year.

Willie had suggested buying a strimmer/bush cutter. Discussion on using battery or petrol and Judith would ask what the RSPB use.

Janine would get comparison from the company where we bought the mower and investigate training if required.

**Action: Judith, Janine, Willie, all mowers!**

**Boundaries**

Cassidy’s garden. Alan had tried to remove some but it had been difficult as the rhyzome roots went a long way and had to be totally removed. Although it was of value to wildlife, blackthorn was extremely invasive and very vigorous. Janine suggested cutting down to grown level repeatedly over several years and to remove roots, starting at the outside and working in or starting from the garden. Use of a chainsaw or even getting a digger in was suggested but Alan advised it could be dug out. It was agreed that we would cut it back in stages. Stage 1 would commence in late Autumn – with a work party in November to make a start. Rick at the garage has a wood chipper and we could possibly use this to get rid of cuttings. Phase 2 would be a work party organised in early Spring to continue the work.

Iain had asked about the gates as when the wood swells, they are difficult to shut and the latches keep catching the wood. Judith suggested metal gates in keeping with the woodland and general discussion took place. It was agreed that we would approach the Kinross Fund who had asked if we wanted to put in an application (1 November is the next application date), as a capital expense and gates would fit in with that. Carrs of Billington at Milnathort were suggested as suppliers of agricultural gates with spring pull out handle. Janine volunteered John to investigate this! We may be able just to tweak last year’s application.

Fencing at the South end of the woodland need to be replaced with stock fencing and Phil offered to assist with this possibly with supplies from Coventry Fencing.

The boundary fence with the Wallace’s needs to be replaced. Alastair agreed to approach Hugh Wallace to discuss the boundary and walk it. Gill suggested Iain Wilkie who may be able to give us a ball park figure to replace this and would ask him.

The stone steps at the West Gate have broken and grass is growing over. Alastair and Phil agreed to look at repairing this.

**Action: All, Gill, Alastair & Phil, John**

**Banking**

Judith advised that currently our bank account does not allow use of internet banking or debit card! Our account has now been changed to a Community Account to facilitate these.

Julie advised that we had made £4.17 so far using Amazon Smile. It’s really easy to sign up to and Julie is going to email details (was registered under our old name Fossoway Access & Amenity Project Group).

**Action: Judith**

**AOCB**

A big Thank You to Shane and Audrey Johnston at the Fossoway Garage for volunteering to donate/sponsor the petrol for the new motor mower. A note of thanks to them and on Noticeboard.

**Action: Hazel**

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

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| **Dates for 2021** | **Event** |
| ***Fossoway Gathering*** | ***Saturday 4 September*** |
| ***Work Party to remove Blackthorn – Stage 1*** | ***November, date tbd*** |